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# Jedi Perspectives

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The many colours of the Jedi perspective

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Edited by Edan

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*June 2016*



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# Introduction

This book is a collection of views contributed by members from The Temple of the Jedi Order. In order that you, the reader, may absorb and reflect without influence, the authors' names are not presented with their contributions.

The names of those who did contribute to this book, and to whom many thanks must be given, are, in no particular order:

MartaLina	Aqua	Bareus	Kohadre
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This work is freely available for copying, sharing, and distributing for and within the Jedi community.

# From the Editor

When someone new to the Jedi community asks ‘what does a Jedi believe’ they may be forgiven for thinking that all Jedi believe the same. The threads of peace, compassion, patience, and a desire to improve oneself, for example, can be found running through all Jedi, but how each person views the colours of those threads may be different. The purpose of this book is display the diversity of thought in the community, with the intention of helping anyone on their journey find understanding in different viewpoints and perhaps help to develop their own.

It is important within the Jedi community that we do not just recognise diversity of thought, but celebrate it as the fountain from which inspiration and personal development may emerge.

While you read through the beliefs and ideas of the many contributors to this work, take time to consider your own values and find understanding and acceptance in any differences you may find. They may even change your mind.

I hope that this collection proves useful to you, and I would like to thank all those who took the time to write up the thoughts that made this work possible. I would also like to thank Loudzoo, for his time and patience in proof-reading this work.

May the Force be With You

*Edan*

## Chapter 1

# Peace

“In your head, heart and body, be at peace.”

### *View 1*

Peace seems to be what everybody wants when you hear them talk, but only a few really try to establish it. When I think of peace I think of a state of mind where the problems of the world or my environment can't hurt me or tip me out of balance. Peace needs togetherness, it needs partners who want peace as well. Clearly we can only achieve peace when we have peace in ourselves to start with.

But the world and beyond is not just you. We are all part of a bigger reality than we can comprehend and the pursuit of peace sometimes seems a fight that we cannot win. When I talk about peace I rarely mean World peace because that is too big for me. Start small within one's own head and heart and body. Meditate on matters that make you unbalanced and make you not feel at peace with yourself. Then to be at peace with the fact that you accept others for who they are, accept the situation you are in.

To be at peace with a world full of hate and anger is a great task not to be taken lightly. To sit down and find rest is discouraged by television, your mobile phone, and even if you are in your car where you are distracted by big signs. The whole society is focused on keeping you busy. You have to obey laws that don't seem fair, you have to work to you limit because of taxes. TV shows are full of messages that tell you to consume, tell you that you need stuff you cannot afford so you get frustrated. The only reason to really get frustrated is that you cannot switch off your brain and sit still.

So what to do? We don't all live in a paradise of peace and silence. Well, start with yourself, here in the now, where it is hopefully safe and warm. In your head, heart and body, be at peace.

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### *View 2*

Most people would agree that peace is one of those worthy goals in life. Both peace within, and the broader and more elusive world peace, seems to be sought after, at least in theory.

The dictionary defines peace as “freedom from conflict” and also as “cessation of war or violence”. Especially in the context of the latter, peace seems to be the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, more so for people who have had to endure living in a war-stricken country. Even for the average person, the idea of a no-conflict life seems both enticing and improbable.

But is a life without conflict possible? Desirable even?

I think we have the tendency to approach the ideal of peace the wrong way. We seem to be set on building institutions and passing legislation that serve as checks and balances to keep the distribution of power more or less even, and when that doesn't work, we have military personnel and economic sanctions to enforce peace.

At the personal level, we seem determined to squash out our negative emotions, hoping that in this repression we can gain inner peace. So many self-help books are full of techniques to avoid the explosion that comes from inner conflict.

However, both at the macro (world) and micro (self) levels, we are dealing with the symptoms rather than with the disease, and this is both ineffective and unsustainable in the long term. You might be able to penalise a country heavily into peace or count to ten as often as you feel anger creeping up on you, but eventually things will have to explode, as enforced peace is simply a different type of violence, and by definition, not peaceful.

Though I hardly have the solution to finally achieve peace, I do believe that it starts by acknowledging that there is conflict in the first place, and that it must be managed (not fought or repressed) in order to reach a state of peacefulness, a state in which this managed conflict is used constructively and productively dealt with, and thus a sense of security can ensue, which is what peace is about.

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### *View 3*

The thing that naturally comes to mind is the part of the Jedi Code: "There is no Emotion, there is Peace." Personally, I prefer the alternative code that says "Emotion, yet Peace." Why? Because it's silly to say "There is no emotion." Sure there is! I just felt one! You're saying these things don't exist? Am I to ignore a core part of what I am?

I find it easier to understand "Emotion, yet peace." Although there is emotion, I am still at peace. Or at least I can still find it. I always imagine it like a hurricane. The winds are howling, the rain is pouring in, roofs, wood, cars, trees, and whole houses are getting ripped to shreds and whirling around in this storm. And here I am, standing at the eye of the hurricane. Observing, understanding, but otherwise untouched. It takes an act of will to keep the storm from drawing you in. It is from this position, I find the best choices come.

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### *View 4*

My understanding of the concept of peace has come with age. I've always been an irreverent punk. Arguments and debates were often more my style than any form of peace.

I think, however, that this has only made me appreciate peace more now. After so many years of mostly meaningless strife it feels good to relax and allow peace to flow.

What is peace to me? Peace is the state in which bliss can most easily be attained. When one is at peace with the world it becomes easy to appreciate the simple things. One isn't bothered by trivial concerns or petty conflicts. I can open my eyes now, look around, and smile at something as little as a flower growing or the glass of water I am drinking. Setting aside conflicts and disagreements allows me to find a sense of great harmony: harmony with other people, harmony with nature, and harmony with myself.

There are many ways to find peace, but I think that anyone can take advantage of any method. Meditation can certainly bring a sense of peace. In the softness of contemplation there is a definite sensation of silence and balance. Finding one's centre, whatever that means for you personally, in meditation is often a first step towards inner and outer peace.

Other methods of finding peace are as varied as the individual. Accepting the world as it is and one's life as it is, are ways to peace. When we let go of preconceptions and misconceptions and stop yearning for how we feel things should be, there is a fundamental peace to be found. Acceptance is something I've also struggled with, perhaps more so even than peace. That serene sensation of belonging can be elusive. I think letting go of the past is a first step. Realising that there is a deterministic set of events that have led you to where you are now can help. Events proceed from each other and often one event causes another. Allowing yourself to be at ease with this realisation can bring peace. Worries about the future may fall away in the same manner.

I don't know that peace is truly the lack of conflict, as much as the realisation that conflict will happen and making peace with that fact. There will likely always be disagreements between people; it's a part of nature. The predator battles for life as much as the prey animal does. Struggle is a part of this world whether we like to accept that or not. Finding peace through such conflicts is a true accomplishment.

## Chapter 2

# Wisdom

“Knowledge is a tool to be wielded and wisdom is the hand that properly wields it.”

### *View 1*

Wisdom is one of the three basic tenets of Jediism and is described in our doctrine as the sound application of knowledge.

Wisdom is not knowing facts, wisdom is knowing what to do with those facts. For example, one can know how to use a variety of tools to do construction. There are band saws, table saws, hand saws, hammers, drills, screwdrivers, sanders, and many more. Knowing how to use each of those tools is knowledge, but knowing when to use each is wisdom. You could use many of those tools to perform the same task but one is usually more efficient than the others. It is technically possible to use a band saw to cut many pieces of wood to the same size, but a table saw would be more efficient and produce more accurate results. Therefore while a knowledgeable carpenter could use either one, a wise carpenter is more likely to use a table saw. Both are technically correct, but one is the wiser decision.

It can be said that moral issues do not fall under the purview of knowledge, but under that of wisdom. Morality is not about facts and numbers, but about heart and compassion. Knowledge gave us the atomic bomb, but wisdom has told us not to drop it again. It is wisdom that came from experience, terrible experience, but experience nonetheless. That is usually how wisdom is gained, from experience. The atomic bomb is a drastic example, but an apt one.

Without experience knowledge simply exists as something in our heads. We may know that a tomato is a fruit, but we may not yet be wise enough to know not to make a tomato based fruit salad. Either we experience something for ourselves or someone else tells us of their experiences, either way wisdom can be gained. Wisdom is usually stronger when one has had the experience themselves, however. Some things really can't be properly explained and need to be experienced first hand.

Knowledge is a tool to be wielded, and wisdom is the hand that properly wields it.

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## *View 2*

It's funny that we always look at age as a factor in wisdom. As though experience through life automatically makes a person wise. Well it makes them older, but have you ever heard the saying there is no fool like an old fool?

Wisdom isn't knowing a bunch of stuff, having read hundreds of books or lived a long time. To me wisdom can be a mixture of all of those things, but also more. Learning and applying to life all of those things - failing, getting up, failing again.

Wisdom is taking what you have learned and building on it.

It's listening to yourself and knowing when to speak and when to shut up. It is using knowledge and experience in the right way, it is knowing that you have much to learn and being content enough to accept that there will always be more to learn.

Wisdom is an open mind, accepting that you could be wrong and there are many perceptions to every moment, and your tiny part in life, in the moment is only a part of the whole.

Common sense is a part of wisdom, as is understanding and empathy and action. At least sometimes, although knowing when not to act, when to let things just flow, is also an act of wisdom.

A child can be wise, in that they can act with wisdom by the fact they tend to be more open minded, perceptive of the world around them, and adaptive to the moment. Not over thinking or judgemental as an adult tends to be.

We can take that adaptability, understanding, perceptiveness and build on it with knowledge and right action, helping us to be wiser.

Hopefully, showing wisdom in our actions and words.

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## *View 3*

"Intelligence is knowing a tomato is a fruit, wisdom is not putting a tomato in a fruit salad." I think this is a nice little gateway to understanding wisdom. Many people think it's common sense, or that it's literal experience (the notion that the elderly are inherently more wise than the rest of us comes to mind), or that it's some ephemeral quality separate from intellect or knowledge. Many others think it's inborn; that wise people are born, not made. All of that is nonsense.

Intelligence, in my estimation, is the ability to apply the knowledge we have access to. But wisdom is knowing when and how to do it. Like the quotation above, just because something is true or valid or accurate doesn't mean it's appropriate for the task at hand. Understanding perfect hammer technique does nothing if you need a screwdriver; likewise, the right knowledge without the wisdom to use it appropriately, gains nothing.

Many of us have an idea that we understand what's best for those hurting around us, but never bother to ask them what they need. So often we want to tell friends and loved ones who are hurting something we think is in their best interests. But, without knowing their full situation as only they do, it may actually make them feel worse. A kind word spoken at a tender time is worth more than the truth spoken out of turn.

Wisdom is gained with experience, but that doesn't always equal age. I know not to use water on grease fires, for example, and I learned that very young. Water's perfect for paper fires, but it's not so useful in the kitchen under such circumstances. I know that there are a ton of opening moves that won't sacrifice a pawn in chess, but that knowledge alone doesn't tell me which one is probably the best at this point. Wisdom—understanding when to apply knowledge—is what lets me decide if a gambit is worth the trouble, or if I should keep my pieces intact. It lets me decide when I should speak the truth and when I should, instead, merely listen. Intelligence is grand, and knowledge is power, but neither go far without wisdom. Be wise.

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#### *View 4*

In our Three Tenets wisdom is the “sound application of accrued knowledge and experience through patient, good judgment.” I always imaged wisdom as the ability to use knowledge at the right time in the right context. Like worldly wisdom than would be knowledge of worldly things, with the ability to use them at the right moment. Wisdom in matters of the heart are then maybe the ability to use one’s knowledge of emotions at the right time and place, provided that one is honest about these of course?

Wisdom also relies on the choice you make, it can be wise to run away from things, it can be wise to meet them head on. If a problem presents itself, you can turn it into a challenge. Every time I think I am closer to becoming a little wiser I discover a lot more things that are not that wise though. This makes it hard to really give an objective description of what I think of as wisdom. For instance, what if you need wisdom at hand? Is it then not wisdom because there is no patience involved and can people who have little knowledge be wise? The more I think about it the more I am convinced that one can never consider oneself wise. Because it's not long until your next mistake. To be humble in these matters is the wisest thing I think. Furthermore I find that it's easier to see in hindsight which were the wise decisions that I made. That makes it impossible for me to see how I could become a wise person because I don't know beforehand do I?

## Chapter 3

# Guardianship

“It is a role which allows the spiritual dimension of humility to manifest in the application of security.”

### *View 1*

What does it mean to be a guardian of someone? Well, obviously, we can derive some importance from the word guard, but why are we guarding this person or thing, and from what? When I think of someone being a guardian, I am immediately brought to the image of the knights of old, protecting the weak and fighting for justice. They didn't do the right thing because a country told them to do something, they protected others because it was the right thing to do, because they could. So too are guardians given the task of defending someone from an oppressor, usually to stop a greater wrong. Perhaps I'm being too poetic here, and we should look at how to apply this idea to everyday life. Let's say that a child can no longer live with his or her parents and must move in with someone else, someone deemed worthy and appropriate. That person is now the child's “guardian”, which is more than just a supervisor or a babysitter; this individual has been chosen to be the protector of this child because of their values, and I think that this is the kind of connection that we have to think about when approaching a Jediist guardianship of people. Even when people are not in “danger”, we present ourselves as being there for others, letting others know that even when they do not ask for help, we will be there to offer our assistance.

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### *View 2*

This idea has special significance to me. Although my grandmother, my aunt and her husband together raised me, my mother still had official custody of my sister and me. We were officially on paper listed as Wards of the Crown. Our aunt was our legal guardian. For most things, it was business as usual, except that we had to have our school notes and report cards signed by my aunt. We had to make ~~one~~ two Mother's Day cards (none for Mother, but one for Grandmother and one for Aunt), and a Father's Day card for Uncle. It was different, but it was what we grew up with and all we knew.

Now that I'm older, I see guardianship as both a solemn duty and a sworn privilege. A person does not take the role of parental guardian on a whim. There has to exist some fairly serious extenuating circumstance for this ever to come about as a reality. I think this must be true in all forms of guardianship, no matter the pretence. What must exist is a willingness to do what is necessary in the interests, first, of that which one takes in guardianship. There is an element of self-sacrifice that is expected and required to be performed, if necessary. The key is the willingness. Of course a natural parent is going to

do these things. But to ask a person to do something for someone else's children is a level of commitment and love that goes beyond that. That to me is what guardianship is all about. It's about taking responsibility for something that exists protecting it, nurturing it, and helping it grow only for the benefit of doing those things. To do it willingly without any concept of return, and with the satisfaction only of knowing it is right is true guardianship.

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### *View 3*

Guardianship is activity to meet the duty to serve some need and to some undefined extent, to uphold a commitment to some nature of vulnerability - to shield from both direct and indirect interference. A duty of function more than form, it is a role which allows the spiritual dimension of humility to manifest in the application of security. While it inherits the capacity to exert action, it centres around an enduring element of watchful awareness, a 'sheathed sword' and overall readiness to act decisively without comprising the objective of protection and responsibility of service.

As C. S. Lewis put it;

"Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call "humble" nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. If you do dislike him it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all."

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### *View 4*

I wasn't raised by my parents, and my legal guardians were my grandparents. Still, each of my parents tried to fill the role of guardian at different times in my life, and each of them felt some responsibility to do so. In my experience, guardianship is generally about going through with responsibilities solely for the sake of another individual. That doesn't only apply to the familial guardianship role, but a wide range of activities. Guardianship may be more precisely defined as an extreme form of altruism where one party (a guardian) feels a personal responsibility to benefit another party. In one case, my legal guardians felt a personal responsibility to benefit me by providing me with everything I needed and some of the things I wanted. If your friend got bullied in elementary school and you defended him, that could be seen as an act of guardianship. But just defining guardianship doesn't do us much good. Instead, let's briefly consider why we consider guardianship to be a good thing.

Why do we perform completely altruistic tasks, especially when they can be greatly detrimental to our own lives? Maybe because we expect, at some level, some sort of compensation for our efforts; the child eventually takes care of the parent, for example, as some sort of extension of the golden rule “do to others what you want done to you”. Or maybe because we just have a drive to provide for others, and there’s never necessarily any reward in consideration. It’s been said by some that nothing in life is free, and that we only help others to help ourselves. If we’re all one in the Force, then by helping others, we’re literally helping ourselves. Then what drives us to altruism instead of trying to benefit ourselves only?

Opposite the spectrum of altruism, is apathy. Apathy being considered a bad thing is most likely why people will perform altruistic tasks. Apathy is good in certain situations, like when you’re trying to stay neutral. But constant apathy doesn’t make the world a better place. No one would care enough to make any advancements in science, technology, or philosophy. No one would care when their fellow human beings are being killed. It would be the kind of world that most people wouldn’t want to live in. It’s possible, and I’d say probable, that we unconsciously reject apathy by embracing altruism, and that since guardianship is a kind of diligent altruism, it is thought of highly in our culture.

I think that serves as a fine explanation for why we consider guardianship to be a good thing. Ultimately helping others does help ourselves, and we embrace altruistic actions like guardianship because we are trying desperately as a species to avoid a world without altruism.

## Chapter 4

# Fear

“They know that by giving of themselves, they are furthering the humanity of us all.”

### *View 1*

Fear, first and foremost, is the relative shift in one's awareness of self toward a simplified model of reaction, centred on self preservation. The ongoing natural waves of subconscious thought shift from a gentle rock for its wants, to a steep slide of ones' focus to potential escalations of danger. Fear retains the capacity to take hold and drive you in one direction flat out, or flip you over into a stasis. It is a particular manifestation of shyness, in that one recoils away. It is triggered by detection of threat to self, but not triggered by your conscious mind, and this means you start to lose control over your decisions as your fear escalates.

While rational fear is a valuable ally, it is irrational fear which can really challenge the very foundations of one's own self identity and agency of self. Controlling fear is not so much about being disconnected from yourself but rather understanding fear as a desire of your subconscious to know more, dilute uncertainty, be prepared. Ignorance is the fuel for fear, and so if we recognise its value for early detection of threats, we can work with it to refine our conduct and broaden our capacity to experience life more fully. We increase our safety by informing our boundaries by helping shape their size and shape, in more practical and realistic terms.

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### *View 2*

Fear is something of a curse and a blessing. Few people, I think, particularly like feeling true fear. Aside from the thrill of “haunted” houses on Halloween and horror movies we tend to avoid frightful situations in favour of more pleasurable ones. Fear is one of the motivating factors that drive us to “fight or flight.”

Our bodies automatically respond to fear and, in a truly fearful situation, there probably isn't much thinking involved. This, however, can be altered with proper training. Law enforcement, the military, and various other occupations are fields that offer this training. I feel, however, that anyone can be taught to slow down and analyse a situation before reacting out of pure fear. This can be important for anyone wanting to protect others from harm. If we can only slow down and think before making a rash decision our fears can be overcome in the moment.

More importantly than all this, fear is a necessary stimulus. It tells us that our lives might be in danger. Fear is useful because it, like pain, tells us that something isn't right. When we feel fear in a situation that we then repeat, the fear might diminish, and we might become used to it. This is much like pain. The more pain one feels over time the better one can usually handle pain in general.

Sometimes fear does not appear when we feel it should. Our responses to a given situation do not always match up to our own expectations. Some things that would terrify one person may not bother another person at all. There is always a reason for fear whether we can identify it immediately or not. I'm sure we've all felt that sudden sensation of fear where there is no visible reason to feel afraid. It is in these times, especially, that we must stop to think before deciding how to respond to the fear.

Personally, I try to focus on how useful fear can be rather than worrying over the more negative aspects of it. Fear can teach us a great many things about ourselves and the world around us. We must use fear as a tool when possible and react as wisely as possible when we feel it.

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### *View 3*

Few things reveal a person's make up more than fear. Fear is a base instinct, it is one of the few things that can short-circuit our programming and cause immediate reactions. Some fear is primal, over millions of years this fear has adapted into an unusual ability for humans to spot snakes and spiders to an uncanny level. Other fears are learned, in many Western cultures we fear death. What is it about fear that reveals to us the character of someone?

The idea of fight or flight is one that addresses fear. We know through a woman who has been heavily studied that a portion of the brain, once deteriorated, can remove the ability to feel fear [see notes and references]. Fear then is an instinctual action that the brain resorts to when certain programming is triggered by specific scenarios.

It is here that we realise that the character of a person can be revealed through fear because it is the stripping of all high-levels of thought and awareness and peering into the mind of the human animal. Ruled by fear, we make decisions that lie at the root of our self. It is only through a constant self-awareness that we can program other triggers into our brains, overriding instincts and actions that are for self-preservation only.

We see the disregarding of fear quite often, the rescue worker who risks themselves to hold onto someone falling down a precipice. The soldier who dives on a grenade, meeting certain pain and almost imminent death to protect the many. These people have taught themselves to handle situations that extend beyond or perhaps to the opposite of what our instincts are. They know that by giving of themselves, they are furthering the humanity of us all. They have overridden their primal responses for the betterment of others. It is

through these examples that we know that we do not have to be ruled by fear. We must only understand that when fear comes we should evaluate, understand and override it in our actions.

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### *View 4*

Fear, our problems all contain it. In going from being certain, to uncertain, we call experience fear. The set of events that are required to fear, we call danger. One does need fear to shape its boundaries, both mental and physical. One cannot have fear if one is not aware of it. So why does one have fear, questions will come. If we realise we make fear ourselves, because we are ‘aware’ of our situation, we can understand that fear is only the change within ourselves. It takes over our own self-image, if we try to force ourselves to not allow this change. We must accept it as part of ourselves in order to understand that fear cannot be forced without changing the way how we look to ourselves. We should accept ourselves in order to accept fear.

One does need stability and understanding that fear does not come from the situation, but from the self. When we let go fear, only possible when we let go our mindings about fear. We have to face it to overcome it.

## Chapter 5

# Jediism

“The path of doing more for others than yourself.”

### *View 1*

Jediism is based on philosophy, from the same sources that inspired George Lucas to make Star Wars. Jediism is a religion, a way of life, and a way of doing. Though culture is bound within it, it is an open religion, being open to many different points of view. One who studies Jediism tries to find it in the larger image at first. When one tries to know, one realises knowing less when knowing more is happening; when we accept something as truth we force ourselves to deny everything that falls outside the boundaries of ‘truth’. When we try to know more, we will have to deny as well. That can be linked to the path of Jediism.

Jediism is not only about self-improvement, but also about the path of improvement. One can find its path, if one lets go, and tries something out again. Individualism and the whole shapes Jediism. Jediism tries not to force a path, but to create a possibility to walk the path of life. A way of life, an inspiration and a religion for me.

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### *View 2*

In ancient times, philosophy was not something purely studied - it was a living practice, a way of fundamentally looking at and comprehending the world. It was not religious, in the way we look at religions today, it was simply a choice for how to live one's life in the best possible way. Now, technically, The Temple of the Jedi Order is a Church - a registered non-profit religious organisation. And that's a definition that works for many people - and the relatively strong Christian motif in place within several of the Temple's core documents certainly help draw in people who hail from that religious background. And yet the basic, fundamental core, of Jediism isn't actually religious in nature. You can't worship The Force in the same way as you might worship a God-concept anyway, so the religious attitude within Jediism is instantly forced (ha) into a more holistic, non-dualistic, mentality from the start. I, however, don't believe that this is the real centre of Jediism. While I believe that plenty of people need a religious modality of the sort that they are familiar with in order to interpret and explore the Jedi path, I believe that the core principles of Jediism that people are unconsciously drawn to, are those of mythology, symbolism, history, critical thinking, psychology, and philosophy. I believe that Jediism fills the same sort of role as the “living philosophies” of the Greek and Roman times - and fits this role much better than it does that of a new world religion.

Jediism is still incredibly new, and often mired in social expectations and fantasy-fetishists who wish they had magical powers. However, the same qualities that lead to these issues (that the trappings of Jediism are based upon fictional characters from a 70's sci-fi space opera) are also its saving grace. Jediism comes self packaged with a healthy dose of self-reflexivity, by which I mean that it's constantly forced, by its very nature, to reassess itself, and do so with at least some measure of humour. Underneath that self-reflexivity, however, lies connections to very deep spiritual and philosophical traditions. George Lucas built much of his work upon old myths and practices, especially many of those observed and cultivated in the East, and as the fictional franchise evolved it was restructured and added onto by numerous other minds, all with their own ideas of how the characters in the fiction functioned. It was through this process, as much as any that takes place within TOTJO or any other specific organisation, that shaped the underpinnings of Jediism. Hundreds of perspectives building a new type of philosophy from pieces of hundreds of older, established philosophies. In a way, Jediism could represent the "ultimate" internet-age philosophy, in that it's a cooperative philosophy based upon the input of a vast community - rather than that of a few spiritual "gurus" or entrepreneurial "prophets".

Jediism is still new, and still developing, and right now it doesn't actually know exactly what it is. I believe however that it is a recreation of the principles of philosophical study that we saw in ancient times, with perhaps a somewhat stronger emphasis on the "spiritual" or inner wellbeing of its practitioners.

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### *View 3*

Jediism is a new name to an ancient faith. In eastern cultures the variations are Taoist and Buddhist. This face which may branch from a cult classic science-fiction film, but the spirit is much deeper and much older. The Jedi in the movies are perceived as warrior monks, much like the old marshals of the ancient west. Sent out to maintain balance throughout the galaxy, they may resort to violence if necessary but always as a last resort.

The backbone of the Jedi is the Force. The Force is known in older beliefs as Chi. The Force is the energy of all living things that connects all living things. The Jedi dedicate their lives to the understanding of the Force, and how it influences all life. Functioning as a well oiled machine to sustain itself and all of us along with it. There are two sides to the Force, light and dark. The light is the way of selflessness, dedication to the masses with no one person more valuable than any other. The dark side, being opposite, is the way of selfishness. It focuses on the individual self held above others. This could also mean servitude to a powerful individual. The light serves all; this is what it means to be a Jedi.

I personally believe that the Jedi are the standard of humanity on its best day. It is the path of doing more for others than yourself. As all Jedi are human, we all learn different skills in different ways. One of the purposes of the Jedi is to convey our knowledge to the

less experienced Jedi, as we are all guided by the Force to utilise our skill sets to continue in the evolution of life. Without the Force there is no life, and with no life there is no Force.

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### *View 4*

Jediism is a community based practice where ‘travellers’ or many faiths, backgrounds, and purpose come to seek out common knowledge.

More and more people are questioning the faith’s and religions of their parents and grandparents. They are awakening to new possibilities and becoming more aware to other systems of beliefs. As our countries become more integrated with different cultures, others will and have found themselves changing their own attitudes or beliefs, dependent on their own life situations and influences.

Some have had bad experiences in their present faith, some have had very little to look towards. Some simply question other possibilities and nearly all of them have had the influence of an unlikely source: Star Wars, be they fans of George Lucas’ famous films, or simply curious, either sincerely or mockingly, they have all found themselves searching for that strange new religion they have heard about, or accidentally stumbled upon it during their web browsing, as I did.

Jediism is still new, even after these years and is currently mostly internet based. This is because the member base comes from all over the world and the online setting helps us all to connect, communicate and learn from each other despite our being spread across a vast distance.

As a result we, or should I say I, have found the online community of Jediism to be more than just a teaching tool or a community of members. It is a family.

Growing up, I lived in a little town in a small state and of isolated beliefs. My family has been Mormon/Latter Day Saints (LDS) for many many generations; my friends were LDS, my friends of friends were and so was everyone in the town. It is part of the schooling system, it is part of the curriculum. You are a product of what you are exposed to, and as a child I had little other influence save those of LDS practice.

Thankfully my father and mother started the trend of questioning the common beliefs and practices, and allowed me the freedom to do my own searching for divine answers. I found those answers and many more questions in the online community of Jediism. Over time, my family grew to encompass many Jedi from all walks of life. Through Jediism I became exposed to practices and beliefs I was not aware of. I learned that some of the things I believed had been taught for even longer than the common faiths and religious practices that are around today. I learned how to be a strong and unique individual, I learned how to be student, to be a teacher, to be friend, and to be a mother.

Jediism is the building, mountain, school, home, dojo, temple, tool, stepping stone, that provides an exposure of vast philosophical practices that inevitably aide you in finding out who you really are: a Jedi, a mother.

Jediism in itself is not a singular definition. It is dependent on those who follow it, and practice the tradition of the Hero's Journey by asking questions, seeking the answers, becoming the student, and being apart of the community so that you can one day master yourself, and discover you.

## Chapter 6

# Justice

“Jedi aim to embody empathy and compassion and provide this to all, even those who may seem unjust themselves.”

### *View 1*

My understanding of justice is that justice is mainly associated with the lawsuit process, and justice in this context is the end and result of it, if I am to make an example:

A individual has harassed a co-worker, the individual has bribed the judge to be in his favour, and so he wins the case and gets away with the harassment. This is not justice, firstly he bribed the judge and he also won the case and didn't face the effects of his actions, what would have been justice would be if he lost the case. If he hadn't bribed the judge the man would have lost and he would have faced the effects of the harassment, whether if he would do it again or not is irrelevant however, but as long as he would have received a punishment for his actions then it would be justice.

My perspective on justice is that I do not agree with it to 100%.

Take the death penalty for an example, people claim that it is justice when a murderer gets killed because of his actions, and thereby he receives the same fate as his victim. My belief is that life in all its forms is sacred, and has a worth. So the death penalty doesn't fit with my beliefs, and since it can be said to be a part of justice, I thereby don't agree with justice 100% either.

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### *View 2*

Justice can be considered as a relative term. For the justice system, it would be considered a system of restitution, punishment, and balance. True justice, in its purest form is closure. When a family member is murdered, the family wants to see that person in prison for what they've done. The life that they ended deserves a life ended in return. Not necessarily meaning the death penalty, rather a life of being put away, where they cannot kill an innocent life again.

In the case of a civil dispute, two individuals are in a disagreement and they turn to a court to settle it fairly. Outside the legal system, this closure may come from vigilanteism, destruction of personal property, theft, and criminal mischief. This is because people do not have the closure they're looking for within the judicial system. I believe this is the wrong way because there would be no record of this wrong doing and, therefore, the opportunity to commit further offence remains. When taking someone to court with

gathered evidence and distinct witnesses, the offender is exposed and on public record for their behaviour.

I suppose that the responsibility of true justice, in my view, is not just about closure for the wronged individual but also a responsibility to society for prevention of future offences.

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### *View 3*

Justice is an empty word. The word implies that there is some moral corrective action in place in the World. One way justice is seen in most countries is through the government and the enforcement of laws. Our comic book super heroes also mete out justice, often with the underlying subtext that they are doing so outside of the law. This is how the mythology of modern justice is told to us, because justice as a principal is not justice as a practice.

When we discuss justice it is important to also recognise other elements like fairness, honesty and equity. Few can argue that Western legal systems, despite major efforts, are fair. The entire system of justice has been written by those who seek to remain in power. The best attorneys cost money and those who don't have money can't win without intervention. In my own life, I learned recently that the only legal defence against a frivolous lawsuit by millionaires is bankruptcy. It does not matter how right one is, if one cannot defend themselves due to monetary constraints, they must declare bankruptcy or risk a default judgement against them.

None of this is to say that people don't desire to correct the system of justice, most do. We see it in movements like Black Lives Matter or the American Civil Liberties Union, among countless others. We see it when those wrongfully accused are released from prison due to the hard work of those selfless enough to see it through. Justice is a concept that we seek to uphold, yet find hard to attain. It takes purposeful debate and action to ever adjust the trim towards true Justice.

As Jedi, I believe it is our place to evaluate justice, adapt to its current legal guidelines and do what we can to calmly yet stubbornly tip it towards fairness, honesty and equity. We must observe that which justice does not reach and step in where we can. That isn't to say we should go get law degrees and work *pro bono*, it is accepting that protestors aren't lazy and that innocent until proven guilty should be a universal truth. We must empathise because not everyone has the ability to experience fairness because of their colour or creed.

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## *View 4*

Justice is an important topic for Jedi. It is the second of our 21 Maxims, and plays a major role in many of our paths. To be Jedi is to seek a just path through life. For me, Justice is inherently personal. A quote I like is this one by Thoreau, from *Civil Disobedience*:

"Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison."

We are at liberty to understand what is just and unjust on our own terms, but the flip-side of this is that whatever we do will therefore be filtered through the perceptions of what is just for others. Sometimes this is accounted for legally, and behaving "unjustly" would see us imprisoned. Other times we might be perceived as an unkind or unfair person.

Jedi aim to embody empathy and compassion and provide this to all, even those who may seem unjust themselves. We are therefore wise to consider what is just and correct any mistakes or misunderstandings, to clarify our logic or reasoning in situations where we must apportion or support the dispensing of justice on others. We must try and make as fair an account of things as we can, with the resources we have.

Justice asks that we take into account the motives of others, and show an understanding of their intention in our judgement of their actions (or inaction). We should also try and understand their own values and principles in what we do. It's often said that Jedi expect more of fellow Jedi, as not everyone lives under a blanket declaration of unity and compassion. As a clergy person at the Temple, I aim to understand that even Jedi are human, and to be human is to, occasionally, err. However amongst Jedi, we may understand this, but encourage a kind of "restorative justice" - that is, expecting fellow Jedi to make amends if they behave unjustly.

As a Knight of the Temple, I have additional duties regarding justice, as listed in the Knight's Code. Knighthood requires that my "justice undoes the wicked." That's an interesting take on Justice: to undo the work of wicked people. Note that it doesn't speak of punishment or retribution, only of restoration, of repair or return to the ordinary state. Knights are therefore the ones who reset things, who console the desperate and shelter the forsaken.

## Chapter 7

# Teaching

“Teaching is the power to let someone birth their own ideas.”

### *View 1*

There are many different approaches to teaching. Some people will learn better from different methods. Many of us are not well equipped to learn from simple lectures. There is the standard way of determining the best teaching techniques for a student: auditory, visual, kinetic, etc. For someone like me, however, who is a completely mixed learner, this is unsatisfactory. It isn't enough to just say “you are a visual learner, look at these diagrams or this video to learn.” It takes a tailored approach to each student to find the best method of teaching. This is where public school systems (and private school systems for that matter) can fail with large classrooms and underpaid teachers.

Personally, I've always learned as much or more on my own than I ever learned from others in a classroom. Just talking to others, even about seemingly unteachable subjects like their own lives, can help me learn better than sitting and reading a text book or listening to a teacher. Sure, I still learned during my school days, I learned quite a lot in fact, but the lessons I remember most tend to come from outside the classroom or from off-topic discussions in class.

I think a lot of the trouble with trying to teach is that many educators (whether professional or not) fail to realise that we learn most from doing. What we see, hear, smell, taste, and feel around us can teach us more than even the best tailored curriculum. As Jedi we must be mindful of our senses. We must learn to recognise the stimuli that can teach us well and how to filter out those that are less useful. This is why “focus” is one of the three tenets of Jediism here at the Temple. Focusing through potential distractions helps with learning. This is why it is helpful to have a quiet and well-organised learning environment available for serious study.

Also, we learn well from teaching others. In a rather counter-intuitive way, teaching about something can reinforce lessons already learned. There is something about engaging a student in the search for knowledge that allows us to reexamine and relearn things ourselves.

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### *View 2*

At its core, teaching is the ability to pass on key skill-sets that you know or learned prior to the student, and are capable of passing on to another.

Teaching is a natural survival instinct for all creatures and life, thus preserving and preparing the younger generation for a future without you. But also in cultivating new practices to older methods, thus advancing and evolving our weaker state to something stronger and better than before.

Teaching can be performed in various ways and is determined best by the teacher themselves. From set and rigid structures, to group or individual discussions a Teacher can be indifferent to the student themselves or be quite involved in the student's emotional, mental and spiritual methods of learning.

As Jedi, it is tradition to pass on what we learn to a student or 'Apprentice.' Both in fiction and in real life practices the Master and Apprentice duality has been apart of our path for generations. The ideals and mythos stem from even farther back than the movies themselves right down to the ancient wise masters that students traveled far to learn from.

"I wanted Yoda to be the traditional kind of character you find in fairy tales and mythology. And that character is usually a frog or a wizened old man on the side of the road. The hero is going down the road and meets this poor and insignificant person. The goal or lesson is for the Hero to learn to respect everybody and to pay attention to the poorest person because that's where the key to his success will be." - George Lucas, Star Wars: The Annotated Screenplays

Yoda is a iconic fictional character that deeply ingrains the idea of an old wizened teacher. His cryptic lessons and quotes touch hearts in a more spiritual manner than the usual memorisation and core testing skills learned in schools. This kind of teacher is often seen in a great many religious and philosophical cultures. Jesus Christ was often known as posing in a homeless appearance to teach and test the weary traveler while buddhism and catholic monks willingly submit themselves into a life of poverty to better understand and live what they teach.

Taking examples from modern schooling systems, ancient practices and fictional interpretations, we as Jedi are surrounded by the influence of learning and teaching, and in time, you too will have the opportunity to impart what you learned to another.

To be a teacher is a great honour, and an even greater responsibility.

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### *View 3*

The activities of educating or instructing, are activities that impart knowledge or skill. One of the most important parts of life is to learn. To learn we need teachers. To find teachers is not as easy as we think, the teacher has to be someone who is actually qualified to see the ways in which he can transfer knowledge from him to you. The whole idea of education is to enhance and support knowledge and to bring your pupil to his full potential. So much for the theory because in practice, the educational system in most

schools are grey moulds that every student has to fit in to make it to a certain grade. They are not individually tailored but just a small part of knowledge that is useful in a certain part of the job market. To teach every individual at his own pace and to bring this person to his full potential is not a priority in this society.

Jedi teachings are completely different from the normal school situation, students study at their own pace , in their own area , and are matched to the right teacher - they usually find each other. A lot you have to do yourself, which is good, for stamina and eagerness to gain knowledge. A certain way to be a good teacher is to find that certain unique way of teaching, that brings out the best in your students. To give them guidance and very important , know when to leave them be. Students can get frustrated, tired, lonely, or ill, like students in a normal school. I think that we meet the most teachers in real life, the guy that swears at us, the woman who does good even if no one is watching, the ones who are kind to animals, the ones who are not. Every aspect of life has learning possibilities. Its what you decide to do with what you take in as a person, do you learn from it or do you discard it. Some teachers even try to get to the bottom of what you have not learned , which takes teaching up to another level of mentoring. It's just knowledge transfer but also going to a deeper understanding of the material offered.

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#### *View 4*

Teaching is one of the noblest and most rewarding things that a human being can do.

It is one of the best ways to serve your fellow human. As the saying goes, give a man a fish, feed him for a day, teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime. Teaching is about sharing with others your knowledge and your wisdom. It's about helping them to grow and to prepare themselves for their own lives.

It is also one of the most thankless jobs one can have. In America we have a saying that "those who can't do, teach." But that is far from the truth. Many times it is harder to teach others than to do it yourself. Jedi even have a Maxim regarding this idea:

Intervention: To know when not to act.

To do something for someone is to deprive them of the opportunity to do it for themselves and therefore to learn from the experience. That is why many of the best teachers appear as though they do nothing. They are a guiding hand, steering their students towards the knowledge needed and towards the experiences through which they will gain wisdom.

Teaching is often a difficult road, but it is one of the most necessary of all roads taken. Without teachers where would the world be? Many things can be learned unaided, but I have always felt that even those things are learned faster and better with helpful guidance.

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## *View 5*

There are few prouder vocations than teaching. Through teaching we are our greatest selves because we must not only analyse what we are teaching but we are creating copies of portions of our own minds into another. What, then, does teaching look like?

A mother sings to her baby and smiles, the baby smiles back. The mother is creating a bond, the baby is learning trust and communication. It did not take a lecture and PowerPoint slides, the mother is the first teacher. She reacts to the baby's attempts to communicate, teaching it that a response will come. The baby teaches the mother what it wants.

A boy sits on fence with his brother, overlooking a clearing dotted with trees. The brother points to the birds, naming each one. Together they explore their local universe, each learning and teaching in kind. The teacher is not some someone with white hair, glasses and a corduroy jacket, we are all teachers.

Teaching is a noble profession, it is low-paying in most countries, sans a few like South Korea. It can be thankless, it invites constant criticism, and unlike most jobs you are asked to continue working on your own time. We can all teach but we are not all in the profession of teaching. In teaching, however, my rewards are so much richer than the money I could be making in the technology industry.

It is here that I reveal that I am a teacher, my life revolves around teaching students in college. My pay is lower than my peers who remain in my industry, I answer e-mails and tutor students on any day of the week, weekends included. I form clubs and run events and competitions that garner me no more pay but emphasise the skills myself and my colleagues want to reinforce. We do this because we are sending out orders of magnitude more than ourselves into the world with small imprints of ourselves in them. In a way we have modified their genetic makeup, they are children to us, despite their age. In return, they love us and respect us and, more than they know, they teach us like the baby teaches the mother.

Teaching is the power to let someone birth their own ideas.

## Chapter 8

# The Force

“All that I am is contained not in “me” but in the position I occupy as a being on this Earth and in this universe.”

### *View 1*

Our perceptions of what the Force is, means, and how one might "use" it are extremely personal. Jediism does not try to define the Force, besides describing it as a ubiquitous energy field which permeates all things.

For me, the Force is a perspectival certainty. Think of your body. That's a collection of parts, right? A head, a torso, some limbs... and looking closer, your head has eyes, ears, a nose, a mouth... that mouth is comprised of lips, teeth, a tongue... beneath that is a network of interrelated systems, like your circulatory, respiratory, nervous and lymphatic systems. Each of those has components, too, down to the individual cells, themselves tiny systems. Deeper still we find atoms, protons, quarks and electrons.

So, in one sense there is a body. In another, there are an almost immeasurable number of constituent parts. For me, the Force is the "body" of the universe. It is the overarching system-of-systems, the one true entity. Not just every-thing, but every-where, every-when. We are parts of the wider Force in the same way quarks are part of our body.

One could say it is therefore a kind of perspective - a choice to see the universe a certain way, and my place within it in a certain way. There are benefits to seeing the universe this way, and methods for living with this reality which help us better appreciate our place in the universe. There is a good reason to think of oneself as part of the universe, in other words: we are, after all.

I've previously studied Taoism at length, and I have a degree in Philosophy where I had a large focus on Phenomenology. The philosophies I have always been drawn to are those which show it is a fundamental principle of all things, that all other things exist in relation to them. Every action has reverberations. Every moment has a cause and a consequence. Nothing is objective, nothing "removed" from everything else. There is only the all - and we are as much part of it as a star, a galaxy, or the whole of space and time. All necessary; all connected.

When I think of the Force, I'm often reminded of this quote by Alan Watts:

"You are a function of what the whole universe is doing in the same way that a wave is a function of what the whole ocean is doing."

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## *View 2*

We first come to know of the Force (in those words) through the fictional Star Wars universe of the movies. In this universe, over the span of the first six movies, we learn some things about the Force, including:

- It is an energy field created by all living things
- It binds us and penetrates us
- It has a light side (calm, peace) and a dark side (anger, fear, aggression).
- It is “tapped into” by midi-chlorians
- It both controls our actions and obeys our commands (it has a will but it can also be manipulated)
- Jedi and Sith can train to become more attuned to it and skilled in manipulating it
- It is omnipresent

The movies purposefully keep definitions rather vague, so the concept of “the Force” is extremely malleable, and thus can fit with a great many number of religious or philosophical beliefs out there. Depending on how one interprets the Force, it can be adapted to a Hindu pantheism, neo-pagan mysticism, Taoism, or even atheism. It has also been likened to the “holy spirit” in Christian faiths.

Personally, I feel that all these different beliefs, when distilled from their dogmatic structures, are basically telling the same story: we are all connected in some way, and through training we can become more open to this connection, which in turn grants us a better understanding of the universe, and thus our ability to live in it. To me, it is not relevant whether there is ultimately a conscious, personal deity like those described by most monotheistic religions, or whether this consciousness is simply an extension of us (or us of it). There is some relation, some greater layer of reality that connects us all, and that we can become more sensitive to. That is the Force.

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## *View 3*

I do not know what the Force is, but I can provide an outline I use in discerning its shape.

My understanding of the Force draws heavily on the Buddhist notion of emptiness. Emptiness can be understood as objects lacking an inherent substance or intrinsic Self, this is to say, a Self which continues to exist even after having removed all those things which define its existence.

Suppose we have a chair and we can describe and define this chair in a number of ways, if we were then to remove all of these ways in which the chair could be understood, what would we be left with? The concept of emptiness would argue that there is no “thing” left, because all that which made the chair what it is doesn’t “belong” to the “chair” itself, but to all the ways in which the chair is understood.

For me, if there were 10,000 objects, the Force would not be object 10,001, the Force would be how you understood the nature of those 10,000 objects.

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna (2nd/3rd century CE) argues there is no ontological difference between an object and the quality that object possesses. For there to be something which “goes” there must also be a “goer” (something or someone which is going). But these two ideas are contained within each other, because it is not possible to have something which goes if there is no object which could be going. You cannot have a quality/feature of an object without also having an object to which that quality/feature can belong.

You cannot have a quality apart from an object and you cannot have an object apart from its qualities. Therefore, to have an understanding of qualities, requires an understanding of there being objects and an understanding of there being objects requires an understanding of there being qualities - the ideas arise in a mutual co-origination (the definition of emptiness).

You cannot think of yourself as being apart from everything else if, by removing yourself from all that surrounded you, you would utterly change who you were. What features of me constitute my “Self”? The language I speak? The clothes I wear? The activities I enjoy? But I did not invent the language I speak, I did not design or make the clothes I wear and I can only do those activities which are made available to me.

All that I am is contained not in “me” but in the position I occupy as a being on this Earth and in this universe.

Such is the Force.

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#### *View 4*

First, I feel that it is important to me to identify myself as an atheist. I know that a lot of my fellow Jedi on this site have come from colourful religious backgrounds and each faith is impressively represented here. I'm sure some of their descriptions of what The Force means to them will be fun to read, far more interesting and colourful. I do, however, love that Jediism releases followers from the assumed obligation of following a deity. I've unexpectedly had very little trouble fitting Jediism into my worldview, and that is really a unique thing. The closest I've ever gotten to feeling this included in a religious community previously was with Unitarian Universalism.

But I still couldn't use "The Force" as part of what I believed for most of my journey. I expected this to be the reason I had to eventually leave Jediism, as wonderful as it was. I did actually feel left out because I couldn't buy in completely. And I was still very much on the fence when I started to watch the movie "Mindwalk" from TotJO's IP. I am not a physicist (not even close, I stock shelves), but the descriptions of how we are always exchanging atoms, how atoms aren't always necessarily solid things, how we are all little pieces of each other, how one part of a system depends on another, how they seamlessly blend and connect and change slowly together over time, all depending on one thing, which depends on something else, and on and on. Suddenly it all clicked. There really was a thing that "surrounds us, penetrates us, and binds the galaxy together". I have never really considered the idea of the Earth as a giant organism until seeing this film. For me, to talk about The Force is to talk about that connection, that giant living, breathing THING that we all are together. I don't feel that it is sentient or has a secret plan for our lives or some meaningful destiny that it's taking us toward. I don't believe you can pray to it anymore than you can petition the favour of a friend or boss. I don't believe that it is guiding us in any particular way except forward through time. But I have no choice but to be connected to it because it's part of what we all are. To claim to not be connected would be like an arm insisting it can do all of the same things it does without a body being attached to it.

So, we are a part of a huge seamless organism, ever renewing itself across time and space. When one part dies it is like a leaf on a tree, falling away and being replaced by another when the season is correct. And you may not be able to interact with it in the usual ways that people see deities in, but I do believe you can listen by meditating.

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## *View 5*

Every person I talk to seems to have a different idea of what the Force is. I wonder if that has something to do with our individual experiences and our personal relationship with it. I think part of being on our own paths causes us to think independently too. But I would like to share my thoughts on the matter.

I imagine it like a tree. Each individual leaf is a spirit. A person, an animal, a plant, a rock, whatever you can think of. All the leaves on each branch are of the same kind. So you have human 'leaves' all on one branch, fox 'leaves' on another, all the leaves that represent all the oak trees, and on and on. In the branch that all these leaves are connected to lives another spirit. This spirit is the spirit of all humans, or all foxes, or all oaks. It is made up of the accumulation of experience and knowledge of all the leaves that have ever lived on its branch. Where the branches combine again is another spirit. Maybe the spirit of all canines, all beech family trees, and later a spirit of all mammals, all trees. But the trunk of

the tree, where all this comes from, is what I would consider the Force. In this, we are all connected, and have access to all the wisdom of the ages.

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## *View 6*

Because Jedi choose not to rigidly define the Force, the definition I give to it reflects my own personal experiences and beliefs. I believe that the Force is not something to be revered as holy, but instead respected as an essential part of our existence. Through it, we are incarnate representations of the living spirit which populates our planet and our universe. It takes our essence upon termination of our physical form, and provides it infinite learning experiences through the manifestation in various physical forms both flora and fauna.

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## *View 7*

\* ... beginnings in the before time was to all before-ness, It is, and was flowing into an after-ward, returning toward the beforehand of the after-ness ; Indistinct and formless, senses arise from and in It, yet sound cannot make It a name, nor colour a sight; Neither beauty nor vileness mark or remark Its aspect amply, easily in as-broad bother, though sought, pursued, never recognised nor recalled, but by the subtle softness of forgetting; unconcerned by ever-after be-forwarding things until they are things at all, sprung each and all from It: one, two, to some third wonder and all the rest of what, named now with sounds and other senses, comes and falls away by cause; It is still in the ever-after everywhere, inconspicuously afoot eternity under forever and over-flowing with worlds afire with emptiness, exploited to fullness and exhausted by explanations; Plainly and clearly mysterious in Its clarity and plenitude, It is accessible to all until thought through thoroughly though quite completely connected, accomplishing what cannot be done nor undone by doing or un-doing next to nothing, going every else-where easily notwithstanding occasional obstacles whatever one's importance; Supple as the out-breath, in-bound and blossoming, neither beholden nor bound to Being, Un-born and Undead turning 'round and down, taking up Time or up-taking all the things that have become and thence dissolved ever inward to It; Where It isn't It is intensely active, found where is isn't thus isn't where found, at and as the foundation of forms and ideas, forming, deforming and deepening understanding; unseen, unheard, un-grasped, in and all around, remembered like an after-life before being fore-warned, handled with careful descriptions hardly defining; From death comes Life and all the dances that does until disappearing: disagreeing and desiring, politely pretending positive positions away into negative ones once, twice and thrice times ten thousand senses and names for them, bewildering the beholders of vile beauty and beautiful sorrow – always over and out of the very time It never ever takes... Revolutions around Shadows that share evanescence with Light in tidally held orbital patterns that defy all known and calculated objectives, subjecting the

sensitive to degrees of understanding one may never understand, especially when convinced ; Inconceivable and impossible to tell, felt keenly in every sentiment not thought out, thought absurdly absent from feeling saturated with It, It meanders meaninglessly, winding through possibility ridiculously reserved and extended to middles of endings of ... \*

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## *View 8*

What is it?

I've heard it said to be 'the will of God', or 'the flow of time', or 'everything'...

And, that's how I refer to it, 'everything'...

Most know that binary is 1's and 0's, 'on and off', and this is how I see The Force...

Anything 'in existence' is 'on', and anything not 'on', is 'off' and thus 'not existent'.

Worshipping is not thought of as a 'Jedi trait', and as such, we (most of us) generally do not 'worship' The Force...

But, I think that if we are 'paying attention to the NOW' then we are paying homage to 'everything'...

## Chapter 9

# Service

“...we commit to helping others and bettering the societies we serve.”

### *View 1*

All humankind lives in service to something. To each other, to themselves, to the environments that surround us and shape us - and of which we inexorably a part. In the context of Jediism we take on the responsibility of shaping our service to suit a specific end - both for ourselves and for the world around us. We choose to serve certain ideological principles, and in this service we become something more than we were before. I believe that this voluntary reduction of free will - this choice to take on the mantel of the philosophy we espouse as a way of daily living - actually helps us do more with our lives than we might otherwise do. We commit ourselves to growing, changing, evolving - to bettering ourselves, and we commit to helping others and bettering the societies we serve.

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### *View 2*

My mind immediately goes in two directions here: Military, and Downton Abbey. The idea of military service is probably the most admirable and commendable career pursuit I can think of. I considered it briefly when I turned 18, but I grew up in a time when they said that flat feet would keep you out of the army, and my feet are flatter than the floor. I still don't know if it's really true or not. In any case, I didn't do it and here we are. My heart breaks when a soldier returns home in a casket. I observe Remembrance Day every November with great solemnity, gratitude and pride. To risk one's life in service of an entire nation is really the most honourable thing a person can do, in my opinion.

What does “service to your country” really mean? From my point of view, I look at this type of military service as being a representative of the entire nation, literally standing on the front lines to represent all of the rest of us. That also means being a role-model so personal attributes matter ranging from hygiene and grooming, to honesty and integrity, to physical and mental fitness, and to proper attitude and decorum.

In that sense, and with that broad definition, military service is not unlike the service we encounter in Downton Abbey, and which exists even today in any service industry from banking to insurance to hotels and restaurants. Simply put, it is putting yourself at the disposal of another for their benefit and for their convenience.

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### *View 3*

The Force is the name we give to the belief that we are all interconnected. Jediism is the action we take because we believe we are all interconnected. For me the term "The Force" is the noun and "Jediism" is the verb of the same idea. What do you believe? Interconnectedness. The Force. What do you do because of it? Jediism.

For me, service is a natural reaction. When your life is tangled up with someone else's, you want them to succeed. My life is tangled up with everyone's. This isn't about my ego anymore at this point, it's about all of us. Whatever I do for you, I also do for myself. The saying that "all ships rise together" is true. I /want/ you to be happy, to have everything you need to get through the day, so that you can be able to bring light to someone else that needs it. Not because it will someday cycle back to me, but because you are part of me. There is no difference between the two of us. It's the right thing to do.

Yesterday I was walking up the driveway after a short storm we'd had. It's March and it was our first real rain. It was warm and pleasant, but blew small, loose winter branches into our yard from the neighbour's tree. One of them was laying in the driveway, and as I approached it I could see that it was shaped like a person. And it came to me that this was exactly it. I still haven't exactly put words to my revelation yet, but it has to do with recognising pieces of ourselves in each other. Which is a huge part of why Jediism works.

I really want to be a part of helping the other ships rise. Feeling the pain of those who are having trouble is also part of interconnectedness, one that is hard to talk about. But I want to help make that pain more bearable for others. Anything I can do to help, I will.

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### *View 4*

For a Jedi, to give of yourself in "service" is a spiritual act of sacrificing the comfort and needs of oneself for the needs of another. It is an act of humility that should encompass the integrity of your entire being. Service is not a means to an end but an honour and a privilege. It is the end itself encompassed in a "stand alone act" done for the sheer joy and pleasure of serving another. True service is done without complaint or criticism. When done in this manner it brings satisfaction, touches hearts and changes lives for the better. To be executed any other way leaves it hollow and worthless.

Forms of service could include an act of compassion for another sentient life form or pledging yourself to the service of a group of organisation or even a community. It can include being of help or benefit to another, contributing to another's welfare, providing an act of kind assistance or pledging your time, energy or talents for some useful purpose. You offer these things as a selfless commitment. This in turn creates a path for you to help others with problems or provide for a need.

The true act of service is one in which you expect no return. The act itself is your reward. It is in this form of giving that we receive our greatest gift. This gift is an alignment with our morals. If we do not believe in or have a passion for the cause we are serving the service becomes meaningless. You can't truly be of service to something unless it aligns with what truly matters to you, and it's that alignment that allows you to give simply because it matters. To unselfishly sacrifice of yourself in this way to something outside yourself that you care about causes an internal change within of peace, tranquility and satisfaction.

In this, as in all things, we must approach this spirit of service with balance. We should never give more of ourselves than we are capable of recovering from. This is not only a disservice to ourselves but also to others in our lives. If your choice to be of service is costing you more than you can afford either financially, emotionally, physically or spiritually you need to make a choice to step back from that service. We need to understand that not all are capable of being helped and we are not capable of helping all. Sometimes we must also know when to let things go. To do this we must make a careful and controlled evaluation of each situation that is void of unhealthy emotion but also based on accurate facts. When we are serene and in harmony within ourselves we will know the choice to serve is right.

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### *View 5*

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy." -Rabindranath Tagore

Service, in any form, helps keep us grounded and connected. I implore you, find that which calls to you and dedicate what you can to it. If you have a bit of money to spare, donate to a charity. Or if you have time, you can go volunteer at a homeless shelter, at an animal shelter, a food pantry, clean up the park in your community. There's websites online where you can volunteer and you don't need to leave your home. Watch a friend's kids so they can have a break. Simply listening to a friend who's going through a hard time does a world of good. A smile and wave to the gentleman panhandling on the street corner, or letting someone cross the street while you're driving. Service doesn't necessarily mean you have to save the world. And it doesn't mean that you need to give so much of yourself that you have nothing left for you. But serve where you can. Even something as simple as giving a cashier your honest attention can turn the day around for that person. And there's a little more joy in the world because of you.

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### *View 6*

As a Jedi, service to me can mean either day to day courtesies such as holding a door for someone, uncommon events such as consoling someone who has experienced a loss or is experiencing a time of difficulty in their life, or assisting those in less than fortunate

circumstances through means such as volunteering and community outreach. The most important aspect of service as a Jedi is to serve in a purely altruistic manner however, without seeking gain or recognition; personal, financial, or otherwise.

## Chapter 10

# Love

“I hadn't noticed the connection, the love, until they were gone...”

### View 1

To love and to feel loved is one of the things that most people seek, sometimes during their entire lives. Love is so important to our physical and emotional well-being, that people have actually fell ill or into deep depression (or even to their death) due to feeling a lack of love in their lives.

The word “love” is used to describe a great variety of different feelings, including feelings of strong attraction, romanticism, affection and pleasure. In Ancient Greece, there were four distinct words to describe the different types of love:

- *Storge*: the natural empathy and caring of a parent for a child.
- *Philia*: an affectionate regard between equals, used to describe the dispassionate love of a person for friends, family and community.
- *Eros*: intimate love, like that for a lover or a spouse.
- *Agape*: the unconditional love of God for mankind or of man for God.

Though there are many types of love, and one can feel multiple types of love as they are not mutually exclusive, I think they are all born from a sense of connection, of recognising oneself in another. Empathy is the beginning of love, which is why loneliness can be such a terrible thing. Feeling cut off from everyone else is the cardinal opposite of feeling loved. This “cutting off” does not usually occur physically (one is usually surrounded by many people), but is a social experience. Bullying basically achieves this, by repeatedly instilling feeling of social inadequacy and creating opportunities to socially shun the victim. Others can withdraw on their own, due to mismanaged emotions and perceptions about the self, and can fall into depression because of it.

In this sense, love is not just a feeling we experience, but an attitude and worldview of how we are connected. To actively experience this connection, despite outside circumstance, leads to natural empathy and the experience of both love, and feeling loved.

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## *View 2*

Love is the ultimate human experience.

When we say love we typically think of romantic love. We think of two people, any two people, who want to be with each other and no one else. We think of weddings and anniversaries, flowers and chocolates, holding hands and kissing at sunset. Those are all wonderful things.

It does not always have to mean romantic love though. Love is, at its core, about connection. When you love some one or some thing then you are connected to it. That emotion, which we call love, is the feeling of that connection. The stronger the feeling, the stronger the connection.

The question is do we experience love because the connection exists or do we open the connection through love? Maybe it's both, with one feeding the other. That's the way I like to think of it.

A question frequently asked of Jedi is how they "feel" the Force. My answer is that they experience love. More often than not I say "connection," but what I mean is love. That concept is just a little hard to grasp sometimes. The Force is all about connection and experiencing love is feeling that connection, therefore the best way to "feel" the Force is to experience love. At first it might just be romantic love, that's the strongest, but later on you can begin to feel it everywhere.

Some might say that you can't love everything, I say that's not true. I recently experienced it with two trees that were cut down from in front of my apartment building. I hadn't noticed the connection, the love, until they were gone, but then I could feel a kind of void where they both had been. A connection had been severed and I felt a loss. That's a kind of love.

This is why I say that love is the ultimate human experience. Through love we can become connected with everything around us and truly experience the Force.

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## *View 3*

My understanding of love is that love is a neutral emotion, with that I mean that it is both a good and bad emotion. It can lead to majorly impulsive actions, but also to happiness and joy in life, when you are in love you feel like you have seen a person that you believe is your soulmate, and when you are rejected and those feelings are not accepted by the person which you have them for it can lead to depression and great sadness, and from what I have read it can also lead to obsession such as you begin cutting yourself and you may become a stalker (not from my own experience).

But love is more than just a relation, it is something which can be expressed and felt in more than the way that you want to be in a relation with someone, you can love your friends, your family and also even total strangers in the friendly way.

My feelings towards love is that I have been in love many times, but my feelings have almost never been confirmed. Love can lead to over attachment, and in that way it is bad because one day you may lose it.

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#### *View 4*

What is love; love to kill for your country. Is that love? Love to be with someone that is ‘the one’, is that love? Is love that which expresses the self? Is love that which represents what we are? Love is a subject that no-one truly understands. It makes it so interesting to write about, the depth it brings, the poetry that flows out using the ink.

True love is doing without reason. Doing because you do not know why you do it. If one would ask me, do you love me? If you would say yes, it is describing the past, not the present. I would not speak out of true love. Love is by its very nature not to be known but just to be. Experience can be found within ourselves, our thoughts are expressed in time. Love is a timeless state, our utopia for freedom that only can exist if we let go everything. And just do things without being asked.

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#### *View 5*

When considering the idea of love, it seems to me that most people would automatically think of romantic love between two people. Next would probably be love for children, then family and friends. Third would be what we consider “brotherly love”, or just plain getting along with others and working together, the kind of love shared between neighbours and even in certain circumstances, strangers. Most Westerners are taught from an early age to “love thy neighbour” and to “do unto others as you would have done to you”. The Golden Rule is the very basis of civic order.

As for myself, at this point in my life I am quite content to be without the first form of love. I have no personal need to have romance in my life, and in fact, I am quite enjoying the simplicity of a single, and singular, existence. Being in love is wonderful--the sun shines brighter, the sky is bluer, the birds sing sweeter--but soon the fun begins to fade and the real work begins. Surrendering oneself to a relationship is a compromise of values, goals and identity, and for some people it is a most perfect solution to a most perfect problem.

It is not for the right solution for me, and I am discovering a new type of love that I could not possibly have known in my teenage years, nor in my twenties when I was just getting used to myself, nor in my thirties when I was so career-focussed and relationship-

oriented. It is a love for myself that I am beginning to experience really for the first time. I am beginning to enjoy my own company more than ever before. I love being referred to as just me, and not me and someone else. I love having the bed to myself. I love knowing I don't have to do anything different than the way I do. I love being me. I think this is a love that is undervalued and highly overlooked in our society.

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## *View 6*

I find there are several forms of love. The love for your partner, the love for your children, the love for your siblings, family, your hobbies, your friends, your things, ideas, ideals, humanity, and most importantly (but one most forget) yourself. The volume and feeling of love for these things differs between people. I had to learn a lot about loving yourself. I'm rather selfless by nature but I was taught that I had to sacrifice my love of self for another. And that bled into the rest of my life. I wasn't worth as much as the next person. I know different now, but I know others who haven't jumped that particular ship yet. I just want to take them by shoulders and give them a good shake. You. Are. JUST. As. Important. As. I. Am! You are! I promise! I wish you could see you the way I see you! I think you should consider yourself MORE important than I am! I want you to be the kind of person who loves you. Because you deserve it. You really do. And I know it's not as easy as that. I wish it was. I've been there. I know. In the meantime, I hope you can find someone who will share their love with you. A friend, or a partner, maybe a child or a family member. Or come and find me. I always have some to spare.

## Chapter 11

# Focus

“...focus will be your greatest ally in life!”

### *View 1*

“*Your Focus Determines your Reality*” - Qui Gon Jinn in ‘Star Wars: Episode 1’

What is Focus?

Focus is an ability performed by the thinking process of your mind in order to stay on task of things without distractions, derailing, or procrastination. And then be able to maintain said task until completion.

The ability to maintain a healthy and clear focus can benefit our mental, spiritual and physical health and is a key precept in every school of practice from our common education, to workplace applications and disciplines such as Martial Arts, gymnastics, dance and so much more. Focus is what helps you set, maintain and complete a goal in any subject field you choose.

For Jedi, it is especially important that we understand, practice and learn to maintain our ability to remain focused and on task so that we might set ourselves up as examples to others who seek out knowledge and understanding of Jediism. As well as maintain our goals along the path we have chosen.

By being focused we are able to:

- Complete our goals
- Feel confident and accomplished
- Have appreciation for the lives we live
- Lead by healthy and clear example
- Follow our paths, the Codes and the Force.

There are many methods developed in maintaining a clear focus. Such methods may include;

Meditation - Meditation and/or prayer gives us a chance to centre our energies, thoughts, and goals into clarity by either contemplating with yourself over your distractions and in turn letting them go, or asking your higher divine for aide in re-adjusting your focus.

Daily rituals and/or pre-defined routines - Can help us to stay on track with step by step methods to reach the end results of our goals.

Exercise and healthy eating - Our mental and physical health plays a large part in our mind's ability to remain focused. If you are not receiving proper nutrients, oxygen and blood flow you may find it more difficult to concentrate on the goals you wish to meet.

Learning organisational skills - Knowing where everything is will help you maintain your focus. If your supplies, tools and materials are out of order, lost, or discarded your focus will become distracted in the searching process which can lead to tensed emotions and stress thus destroying your concentration and focus. By keeping your environment in a peaceful and organised manner you can keep your focus where it is most needed.

Listening to music or white noise - Listening to music is a great way to finding your focus dependant on the subject you are working on. Exercise goals go great with music as it positively distracts your mind from thinking about unhealthy desires and gives you a beat to match your actions and motions to. Academic students have reported great results in the use of White Noise sounds which drown out distracting sounds in the work office, classroom, or busy streets outside your window. Thus allowing you to maintain focus.

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## *View 2*

Focus, I would call that enhanced concentration. When I think about focus, I think about the mind, body and spirit moving in one direction. Commonly in every day life all three are pretty chaotic, but when on task when all three are in sync it almost becomes meditative. And in focus everything just seems clear, no pun intended.

It is very easy to lose focus when your day is in a blur. Your body is trying to work, your mind is thinking about bills, and your Spirit is thinking about how to get free. However, this is not always so. When the mind, body and spirit are in sync through something that would be comparable to your personal bliss, it would be safe to say all three would align that is focus. Getting to that point - now that is a challenge. When you're able to be focused, and to maintain it. At that point you really do have to keep your wits about you. Otherwise you wind up shooting yourself in the foot, metaphorically speaking.

It all comes down to how well you can manage your self. Recognising your triggers of different emotions that can either help or hinder one's focus. Also recognising your distractions and knowing what helps. For some it would be music, for others mowing the lawn; just like meditation it's a skill to be learned maintained and utilised.

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## *View 3*

What is going on in your head now as you read this? Are you wondering about where the direction of this conversation is going? Are you thinking about how you may have left your car unlocked, or how nice John Williams' soundtrack is in The Force Awakens, or about what your friends are doing right now? If you're having any thoughts other than what you are reading right now, then you're lacking focus; this isn't a bad thing, but it is worth analysing! To me, focus is being able to clear the mind of almost everything but a single task. Being able to divert all of our energy, mentally and physically, into something specific is no small accomplishment, but it is obtainable. It doesn't matter if focus is reached through meditation, or reading, or taking a walk, but being focus is a great way to clear the mind of all of the junk it has stored up. As many people likely know, having a scattered mind isn't healthy; thinking about too many things at once will lead to less devotion being put into every subject. If you are looking for a way to be able to concentrate on what you deem worthy of being worked on, then focus will be your greatest ally in life!

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## *View 4*

Focus is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as a main interest or line of study. It is also defined as a state of clear vision or perception. So to focus meant to make something your main area of interest or to bring the item, person, idea into a clear perception or vision.

To focus is also to exclude things. In order to focus on one thing I must exclude others. For example as I focus on a work of art I must lose the peripheral data of my vision and bring the object into the centre of my attention. To focus on this writing I must exclude outside stimuli such as my cat playing with his toy or the tv in the next room. As such much outside noise becomes blended into the unnoticed drone of external stimuli we miss each day.

So if we look at the meanings as a whole we see that to focus is to exclude outside stimuli in order to bring a person, object, or concept into greater clarity or understanding. It can also be to make that person, object, or concept the main area of our attention or study.

While this can be a very good idea and have many benefits we must also use caution for focus can have a downside. As Sifu Bruce Lee said "Concentration is a form of exclusion. Where there is exclusion there is a thinker who excludes." So to rephrase this we must be aware that when we focus on one idea or person we are by the nature of the act going to exclude other ideas or people.

So for a Jedi what is important is mindful focus. That is to bring something into a sharper perception to meet our goals of the moment. Yet to be aware of the fact that we will risk excluding and thus missing other things as we do so. This ensures that we can properly

bring attention to what is needed without forgetting that we can blind ourselves in the process.

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### *View 5*

I always think of “focus” as “attention to the “NOW”...

The “NOW” for me is tiered, with a *“greater”* NOW, of my life, where it is going, and things I must do, to *“finer”* NOW, which are the things I have in front of me demanding my immediate attention, and many tiers in-between...

## Chapter 12

# Courage

“It is not the outcome of the action, but rather the conduct of the action which defines courage.”

### *View 1*

Truly, there is nothing as important, and nothing more difficult acquired, than courage. Now, when you hear of courage, what comes to mind? Is it a fireman running into a burning building to save someone in danger? Is it someone steeling themselves to say goodbye to parents and family so that they can move away? Is it a soldier, preparing to charge forward for their cause? These are some of the things I thought of when I was a child, and I wanted to mould my life into doing something great like that.

However, fate would not only have different things in store for me, but it would also present me with the knowledge that courage does not need to be bold in order to be great. What do I mean by this? Well, let's say that you're doing an essay for a philosophy professor and you know that he does not have any respect for religion. However, you are devoted to your beliefs and do not want to be oppressed because of a simple letter grade. So, you decide to include quotes from scripture, or resources based on your theology, knowing fully well that your professor will not be pleased, but you will have done what you thought is right. Do you see what I'm saying? “Life is about courage and going into the unknown,” to quote The Secret Life of Walter Mitty. We don't need to go seeking adventures to show courage, however, we must have the strength to be courageous every day. Maybe you never will climb Mt. Everest, but you can try to ask for that promotion. Maybe you never will take a step on the moon, but it takes courage just to step outside every morning.

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### *View 2*

Courage is an easy thing to describe. It is pushing forward when you want to stop. It is going the extra mile when you want to lay down. It is jumping over the fire, when you would rather never see the other side. Courage is the quality of a person that pushes them beyond what their baser instincts tells them is necessary to survive.

It is survival. Not survival of the body. Our base instincts have that covered. In fact, caring for our body, finding the things that please it, is some of the earliest lessons we teach ourselves. But that elusive trait that makes great that which is humble, that wonder of the human condition that allows greatness, is required for spiritual survival.

We work hard to provide for ourselves. We focus on what gives us comfort, what cares for us and ours, what keeps us going from day to day. But that is not the final stage. That is not the greatest we can hope to expect from ourselves. We must push out, push forward, and embrace a single concept completely: Courage.

Our development as people, the development of our character, will stop utterly the day we say “That is enough. I am comfortable. I don’t need anymore. I’m going to live this life as it is and I know I will be fine.” But that thought is poison to higher purpose. That mind frame is a barrier courage. We are done living life the day we decide we are satisfied.

But why rock the boat? Why place myself at risk? Why pursue something I don’t materially need? I believe the answer to that is that we are not human beings we are animals when we choose survival over thriving. When we decide safety is more important than our own progress we are choosing fear over awe. We are choosing our own limitation, our own cage. The only key, the essential key, the one true savior for us is courage.

In our heart of hearts, we will never be satisfied with easy, with hope, and with only accepting what we have been given. Courage makes us a divine creature and that is what we are meant to be. If you feel fear, that is a sure fire sign that you have come to something you MUST overcome...and you can't do that without acting even though you are afraid. Master that and transcend yourself.

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### *View 3*

Courage is perhaps most usefully thought of as the condition of being resolute in action which incites, or is seen to incite, fear within the self. It is the process of acting against ones own fears to uncover strength and confront failure, shame or other negative outcomes; to confront manifest risk or exposure. It is not the outcome of the action, but rather the conduct of the action which defines courage. In this way it is the strength of the conscious will to define the persons own destiny against forces which challenge them.

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### *View 4*

Courage is a word often associated with fearlessness. Many people see themselves as lacking courage, because they feel it to always be associated with grand ordeals, where people free of fear succeed despite all odds. Courage is not only for battlefields or turning points in society, however. Courage is an everyday trait, practiced on even the smallest scales regularly. And true courage requires a bit of fear.

That's the thing that throws most folks for a loop. So many people feel like they're not courageous because they're afraid, but you can't be courageous if you're not afraid. So many people try to push fear out of their lives completely, but living without fear is just

living with foolishness. Fear is an intentional reaction; we may not feel it for logical reasons, but its existence is intended to keep us safe. Pushing fear out of your life ignores one of the best tools of your body and mind to protect you.

Rather than abolishing and banishing fear, we have to learn to use it as a tool to help us. That's courage. Taking the very real fear that you feel will trample you and hitching it up to pull the plow isn't a small task, but it's a necessary one if you're to persevere. Using that fear to move you to a place of action will allow you to go on the offensive in any situation you're worried about. It gives you time and ability to plan ahead, and make your own choices, rather than simply deal with what's handed you.

When you start looking at courage that way—as a way to use your fear to help you—it becomes a daily practice, not limited to the grand, epic scale of fantastical novels or movies. It becomes something much more accessible. You can make that phone call, you can stretch out for that promotion, or find that new job. You can handle that surgery, you can deal with the responsibility of taking care of the people around you. Everything trial becomes something that you can overcome with the same fear that would have shaken you in the past. These situations begin to give you the tools to solve them; before, you just interpreted them as worry. Now they're something greater. Now they're hope.

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## *View 5*

Courage to me is usually a feeling that leads to action, or you act because of courage, maybe more an emotion quality.. when you are able to face difficulty in your life, or even danger, it takes, grit, determination, courage.

It is not always about fighting or action though it can take more courage to walk away, to do no harm, to make that choice from the heart.

To stand up even when all you want to do is lie down and sleep forever.

Stand up and do the right thing even if it breaks you.

Stand up and face the consequences even as all around you people turn away, don't understand, judge you.

Lose everything but remain the strength needed for those around you.

Do no damage even while others reduce you to ashes of your former self.

Be polite and firm and honest in the face of abuse and hate and lies.

Even if no one believes you.

Stand up anyway because it is the right thing to do.

Just because.

Sometimes courage is slaying the dragon but most times, especially recently in my life courage has been quieter, not dramatic and showy, sometimes not even noticed. It the small moments that could mean nothing to anyone else, but they count sometimes more than people realise. Heroes aren't born just with wild adventures, with great fights.

Sometimes the hero's journey is inside, unnoticed but meaningful to that individual and those in their immediate circle.

## Chapter 13

# Training

“We train ourselves to understand ourselves...”

### *View 1*

We train our body's, minds and souls. While we might focus on one aspect for a while, our training includes all parts of who we are.

We create new habits, healthier lifestyles, whether through exercise or healthy eating or just awareness of our bodies, learning to listen to its needs and learning to understand what we can do. Learning once again to move with confidence, to flow with our strength instead of fighting them.

Standing tall, head high, more aware of our interaction with the world from our body's movements to our energies that flow through.

Our minds we learn to be open, to be aware and focused in the moment, we train them with knowledge that we use with our body's and souls through life, we learn not just by succeeding but by failing and understanding why, and how, and moving on. Training our minds includes creating new habits, learning to focus awareness, creating new pathways that ground us, so that we use knowledge from the past, wisdom but don't become bogged down in the emotional baggage but see it as part of the journey, but not part of our now. We learn to anticipate possibilities, be flexible and adaptable in our approach so that we are prepared and ready to deal with the ups and downs of life. And even if we fail, the failing becomes a lesson we use and move on from. While the hopes and dreams of the future inspire us and motivate us we stay focused here, and very much present in all we do.

We train ourselves to understand ourselves, to find happiness and love within so that we can show that to others, to deal with life as a full companion not just swept along but as an active part of things.

Spiritual training is harder, but we are open minded and can use those things that we discover to help us individually, no matter what belief they come from; they are tools and can develop our spiritual side. No one way is right or wrong but all things hold certain truths and can be felt, even if not fully understood by our centre. Meditation opens our spirits, calms our minds and eases our bodies, like prayer to whatever or whomever you have faith in.

Training is, to me, walking through life with your eyes and mind open and receptive to the lessons that are present each day and using those lessons to help, act, or just send positive

energy out to others, because we are all connected. To be of benefit lessons should be used in life or they are just wasted knowledge, gathering dust.

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## *View 2*

A common maxim among martial artists is “If you can’t do it slow, you can’t do it fast.” The reason for this is that repetitive drills, performed at laboriously slow speeds, are the best way to perfect technique and build muscle memory. To do something well, over and over, teaches your mind and body the technique you’re attempting to learn in a deep way; a way you will not forget. Then, when the technique is needed, it simply comes—there need be no thought to begin it, nor to ensure that your form is flawless. Practice has done that for you. The motion comes, unbidden and perfect, exactly when it is needed at the fullest speed necessary. It’s almost magic.

This is equally true of every kind of training. While it’s a cluster of nerves, your mind works remarkably like a muscle on occasion. If you exercise it, it gets stronger. If you neglect it, it will get weaker. So is the spirit; a lazy spirit has no power, but a spirit kindled by the fire of passion and forged on the anvil of activity will carry the body and mind through the most ardent of hardships.

And yet none of this comes without the training. One doesn’t become a great artist, or a mighty warrior, or an amazing dancer overnight. For every moment of greatness, one must endure hours of practice. Every second of glory in a job well done must be bought and paid for by days of sweat and nights of study. Much like our theoretical martial artist above, muscle memory doesn’t appear overnight. You must program your mind, your body, and your spirit to do the things you require of it in times of peace, or you will never be able to do those things in times of struggle and hardship. Without proper training, without adherence to the lessons you have been taught, or the exercises you’ve been asked to complete, you will falter. The farmer doesn’t reap a harvest without caring for a crop all season. Neither will you succeed without a season of preparation.

To borrow a quotation from the impressive Bruce Lee, “I do not fear the man who practices 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times.” When you have immersed yourself in your training, that one kick will be the most impressive.

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## *View 3*

Training is a necessity of life. Maybe you've trained to pass a test, or to get a job. Maybe you had training on the job. Maybe your job requires yearly refresher training. Maybe a position you're trying to acquire requires training. Maybe you want that summer body or to look like the Hulk. Maybe you want to be the top fighter in the bar, or just to be able to

defend yourself. Maybe you want to be better in your hobbies. Maybe you want to be a better person. Or have better health in all forms (mental, physical, spiritual, social). All this requires training.

So what commonalities can we find in all these different goals. What does it take to get the end result? Dedication, learning, perseverance, understanding, application, and compassion. Dedication gets your feet out of the chair and on the ground. Learning gets them moving. Perseverance keeps them moving. Understanding gets them moving in the right direction. And application helps narrow the path. Compassion is a little odd there though isn't it? But what happens when your feet get tired. When you find that bench to rest them on. Do you beat yourself up over your weakness? Your failure? Should you have been able to go the whole way? Sometimes. And sometimes we end up on a trail that we didn't perceive the difficulties. Maybe there was a flash flood that mucked up the path, or a sharp turn had us heading up over a mountain range. Or maybe we found a branch that turned into a dead end. Compassion lets you rest. But it also lets you rise up again. "I understand that I need this rest, I understand that things didn't turn out like I expected and that's ok. And after a moment, or maybe five, I can get back up again, and I will finish this."

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## *View 4*

Training sounds like a simple thing. Merriam-Webster defines it as, a process by which someone is taught the skills that are needed for an art, profession, or job, or the skill, knowledge, or experience acquired by one that trains. So an easier concept is that it is the way one learns new information, or, the information learned in training.

But what does it mean to train? It means to set out with a purpose of learning something you do not know or to hone something that one does know. It could be as simple as learning a new method of cooking an egg or as complex as how to program a computer.

In either case one is trying to learn that which one did not previously know. It's something that requires both thought and action in most cases. One can train the mind, the body, or both at the same time. This can be via a new class, repeating exercises, or simply thinking about the topic.

What is the same in all cases of training is that it is an attempt to better oneself, learn to help others, or better ones environment. It requires setting aside time and making sacrifices. Despite the pleasure any kind of training brings we are still sacrificing our time and energy that could go to other things. It is committing oneself to a course of study.

What is more important to a Jedi then what we train, is why we train. We train to improve ourselves, in order to serve. We train in order to be able to render aid to those in need as our skills allow. The more we train, the more skill we have, the more we can help. So to a

Jedi, to train is to commit or focus oneself on a skill or idea so as to better yourself and thus those you serve.

## Chapter 14

# Practice

“Practice is a key part in excellence.”

### *View 1*

Practice is the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method as opposed to theories about such application or use. It is anything that we do regularly that develops us. Each of us has dozens of things we practice to varying levels of intention. These can range from internally focused practices such as meditation, prayer or chanting, to every day practices such as brushing your teeth, or saying I love you to a significant other, to practicing a sport or hobby we enjoy, or math problems for a class we are trying to pass.

We won’t always love our practice. Sometimes it will feel great, and other times it will feel bad or even boring. But we practice because it is a way of sculpting our minds and our bodies by honing our mastery of the things we practice. Like a river flowing through a canyon will carve a deeper and deeper ravine over time, practice can instil deep channels of skill in us. Intention is the key that lets us carve the channel in the manner that we desire. This allows us to handle the “floods” in our lives. The deep channels we have carved out have room to hold the intense energies that can come at us in life.

Jedi are creatures of action. Our philosophy is not one that allows us to sit by and idly allow things to happen around us. Instead we are agents of change and champions of harmony. Because of this, one of the most useful tools in our lives we should practice is mindfulness. Mindfulness is not only the source of will and intent but it is also the thing that allows us to accurately interpret our environment. Mindfulness is the ability to see things as they really are, without the cloud of feelings, prejudice, or even mood. If we don’t apply mindful intent to everything we do we will lose much of the focus of our lives.

Many people will say they practice mindfulness every day during their 20-30 min meditation. But this implies that the rest of our life is not practice. In fact, the very living of our lives is a practice we perform every day. As Jedi we practice to improve our compassion, our empathy, our patience, our serenity and our harmony every second of our lives. If we don’t constantly strive to maintain our mindfulness in these pursuits we can easily succumb to anger, depression, and indifference. When we practice mindfulness as Jedi we gain an awareness of things otherwise undefinable, and a sensitivity to the needs of other sentient beings as well as the communities we co-exist in. This in turn allows us to fulfil the grandest of charters, that of being in service to all forms of life.

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## *View 2*

I'm in the military, and when we have exercises going on (war games) I always hear "Practice like you play!" They want us to take the exercises seriously as if they were real-world events. Because we as humans, have a tendency to slack off when we feel something's not important. Practice is. But why? Because when it comes time to put our training into action, what do we do? We do whatever it was we practiced. If we didn't practice to the extent of our capabilities, we might fall short. It might not be enough.

Patience, kindness, love, dedication, honour, respect...these things come about from practice. But so does hate, fear, and anxiety. When we practice something enough, it becomes habit. What becomes habit, becomes character. Think about what kind of person you want to be. Practice that.

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## *View 3*

For me, to practice as a Jedi is to live in a constant state of mental awareness and mental reflection. I have to take a moment in conversation to consider my responses and the implications each one may bring, as well as to monitor my emotion state and prevent myself from being swayed by irrational thoughts or impulses. It is also important to remember that I am flawed, and I will not always succeed in this ideal in every encounter, but that through humility and practice I may improve my consistency in adhering to these ideals.

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## *View 4*

My understanding of practice is that it is essential to reach improvement, and without practicing then you can, for example, have a harder time to perform something such as martial arts or holding a speech. Practice is a key part in excellence, and without it you can never improve, because when you practice you eventually become better at something and in that way you improve.

This is something that I have to get better at. I do practice quite often when I am supposed to, but I am often quite lazy if you would say so.

Practice is a great way of learning as well.

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## *View 5*

Everyone is terrible at everything! At least at first, and that is an important thing to remember when beginning a new activity, whatever it might be. It is going to take time and work to get good at anything, and it is repetition-repetition-repetition, that produces ability. Sometimes we come across an activity which we have some natural talent for, and

in this case the word "terrible" is not quite accurate, but even the most talented beginners are no match for even the mediocre professionals. Why? Because SKILL will nearly always out-perform talent. The only exception that I know to this is the "savant phenomena," where a person just has the innate ability to (for example) sit down at a piano and play, exactly, the song they just heard, without having heard the song before or even having ever taken a single piano lesson.

This is extremely rare, and while it is quite amazing, life itself requires a multitude of skills and even if you do happen to find yourself a savant at one of them, this will not result in overall happiness or life effectiveness if you don't also develop effectiveness at the others.

It has been estimated that MASTERY of an activity requires 10,000 hours of SINCERE and FOCUSED practice: simply "going through the motions" will only make you a master at "going through the motions". So we need to accept from the beginning that we are in for a long and demanding road whenever we decide that we want to become truly good at something.

In my experience, practice needs to be two-thirds discipline and one-third play. The discipline comes in a few different ways but they can be summarised with the words "consistency" "effort" "focus" and "thoroughness". Using martial arts as my example, consistency means that you show up, every class, even when you don't feel like it. The rule is: the days that I don't want to go are most important days to go. JUST GO! Show up, and the rest will take care of itself.

The final ingredient of practice is that it should include a fair bit of irreverent play time. Safety is never something to be treated lightly and some activities require precautions which must be observed. But we learn better when we enjoy learning, and the very definition of playing is that we are having fun. Sometimes people get so caught up in the discipline of the thing that they lose the joy of it and that is a shame. So remember to enjoy what you're doing, remember to play!

## Chapter 15

# Patience

“As soon as you became patient, you started enjoying the journey itself. And suddenly, here we are!”

### *View 1*

An important lesson for anyone to learn is patience. And sometimes, and even harder lesson to learn is when to act. There's a balancing act going on here. Sometimes, if you wait, the right thing will come. Other times, you'll watch it walk right on by if you don't act. Learning which is which is a lifelong task.

On top of this, there are two kinds of patience. A passive kind where you let the time tick on by to say, let the seeds you planted sprout. But there's also an active patience. It's a quiet perseverance. I find this most prominent in any of my larger detailed crafting projects. When I'm forming and tooling out each individual scale in a leather working project, when I'm linking together small individual rings to make chainmail, or when I'm making minute stitches that will make up a piece of art of several square feet in the end. It's hard to start, and it's hard to keep going in the beginning. But having patience and understanding what the end result will be, I can keep going.

I also find this kind of patience in learning. I have a drive to learn something, so I set out and I yearn to know that thing. I want to be that Knight, that Master, that Shaman. And funny thing was, when I stopped focusing on that want, and patience took over, I can stand here and look back now, remembering that. I stand on the precipice of my Knighting and I think “As soon as you became patient, you started enjoying the journey itself. And suddenly, here we are!”

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### *View 2*

“The dogged determination and patience of one person to do what is Right and Necessary may not always win the day or even be noticed, but it will tip the balance just a little in the direction of good.” – Terry Pratchett

This is what patience means to me. “Patience is a virtue” sure, but the above quote illustrates why it's a virtue. Life is short, and then you die - as the old saying goes, and at a certain level all you really have in life is patience. Learning to be patient with yourself, and with the world around you (and the realisation, and patience with the realisation, that this will not always be possible): that is one of the fundamental aspects of Jediism.

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## *View 3*

Patience is something all of us need more of! All our paths are meandering, all take detours and wrong turns at times. All are long - marathons, rather than sprints. In order to successfully navigate the Force, we must have patience - with the external world, with others, and with ourselves. Sometimes we are all impatient, but with practice, patience grows.

Whilst one may call themselves Jedi the instant they learn of our religion, it takes time to integrate and embody its values. Jedi must be patient, not only for our own ends but in dealing with the feelings and challenges of others. It can take years to cultivate a deep understanding of ourselves, of others, and of the unity of existence. We can struggle to keep up the effort, and many fledgling Jedi fall by the wayside, impatient for rank or wisdom or what they perceive as respect.

Patience is therefore a very Jedi virtue. Many Jedi study the Taoist concept of Wu Wei - that is, non-action, or more accurately "only appropriate action". This asks that we wait patiently, until the appropriate moment, to act, without wasting undue energy on that which is not timely. When thinking about patience, it's the reverse of the proverb "a stitch in time, saves nine" - by waiting for the opportune moment, we need not expend more energy than is required.

To illustrate this, imagine a fish in a river. It spends its whole life swimming upstream, where it caught a glimpse of some particularly delicious worms, expending huge effort and not getting far; one day, it turns around, notices there are equally delicious worms in the other direction, and simply allows the current to carry him to them. The wise fish floats downstream.

So too can we come into harmony with the wider systems of the Force. We accept that there are some things beyond our capacity to "economically" control (that is, without more effort than it's really worth expending). We make appropriate actions, at appropriate times, and little by little approach our goals. We learn to trust our instincts, to expect that what will come will be what is needed. If we are striving, we understand we are misspending the energy of our lives. Better to walk a mile, than sprint a hundred meters.

*Tao Te Ching*, 64: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

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## *View 4*

Jedi are leaders. One of the most prominent character traits of a good leader is patience. Patience involves maintaining a state of tranquil fortitude under difficult circumstances. We do not allow delay or provocation to undermine our resolve. We exhibit forbearance when under pressure or long term difficulty. We have the endurance to never allow these

things to cause us to act with anger or become negative. These struggles in life can be with outside forces or even internal struggles. Humans have a tendency to accept short term reward over long term goals. Jedi recognise this in themselves and take steps to strive for the greater long term rewards in life through patience.

Many people will equate success in leadership as the act of achieving results. But the truly wise individual realises that results are not always the most important thing when tackling any situation. Often times a greater success is achieved through patience. It gives us the time to carefully examine things and approach a solution from a measured and multifaceted aspect. We will have many road blocks in life that can leave us unbalanced or unsure of ourselves. Patience will enable us to collect our thoughts so that we may calmly and confidently assess our situation to find the best way forward without undue agitation.

In a world that will constantly tempt us with instant results and gratification, patience is a skill that we must master. It is through the practice of patience that we gain knowledge and wisdom. Developing a good habit of patience comes through maintaining a mindful awareness. Being present in every moment allows us to carefully consider the results of every action we may make. Patience as a component of mindful awareness gives us the ability to consider every option before we say "yes" to any decision. This reduces making a rash decision without first knowing as many details as possible.

When a Jedi comes upon a situation that they feel stressed or agitated about, they should first actively seek to calm themselves by taking a few deep breaths. Then peacefully contemplate the most effective approach to the event or situation. As Jedi, if we allow ourselves the time to properly assess a perceived obstacle we can often either turn that thing to our favour or assimilate it, allowing us to move past it. Developing a strong sense of patience takes an active daily practice of this skill in conjunction with mindfulness. To be able to apply the skill of true patience in all areas of our life is the mark of a successful leader.

# Notes and references

Please find here any references made in the contributions found within this book not otherwise fully referenced, and where the information is available.

## Chapter 4 - Fear

View 3 - "Woman With No Fear Intrigues Scientists." - Jeanna Bryner - LiveScience

## Chapter 11 - Focus

View 4 - "Tao of Jeet Kune Do" - Bruce Lee

## Chapter 3 - Guardianship

View 3 - "Mere Christianity" - C S Lewis

## Chapter 6 - Justice

View 4 - "Civil Disobedience" - Henry David Thoreau

## *Final words*

If you wish to use this work in a manner not described in the introduction, or would like further information, please contact Edan at galae33@googlemail.com.

Peace be with you.